

Shevlin, Thomas, New York.
Studdert, Michael, Utah.

DEMOCRATS

Eschenbacher, Christian, Montana.
Graff, Garrett, Vermont.
Knowles, James, Oregon.
Koontz, Megan, Iowa.
Larson, Tiffany, South Dakota.
Lichtblau, Daniel, New York.
Miller, Anne, Massachusetts.
Raizada, Avinash, Michigan.
Soriano, Jennifer, Hawaii.
Towns, Rachel, Wisconsin.
Wiese, Dayton, South Dakota.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, Senators may be intrigued to learn that during the 74 days Congress was in recess, the federal debt increased by more than \$57 billion.

To be exact, the increase (from November 13, 1997 to January 26, 1998) totaled \$57,033,087,681.31 (Fifty-seven billion, thirty-three million, eighty-seven thousand, six hundred eighty-one dollars and thirty-one cents).

This increase is a blunt reminder that even when Congress takes a break, the federal debt does not. The federal debt will continue to soar unless and until Congress changes the status quo. Presently, each citizen's share of the national debt is \$20,424.89.

Mr. President, with this in mind, let me begin where we left off:

At the close of business yesterday, Monday, January 26, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,487,280,357,810.54 (Five trillion, four hundred eighty-seven billion, two hundred eighty million, three hundred fifty-seven thousand, eight hundred ten dollars and fifty-four cents).

Five years ago, January 26, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,171,138,000,000 (four trillion, one hundred seventy-one billion, one hundred thirty-eight million).

Ten years ago, January 26, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$2,448,079,000,000 (Two trillion, four hundred forty-eight billion, seventy-nine million).

Fifteen years ago, January 26, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,196,856,000,000 (One trillion, one hundred ninety-six billion, eight hundred fifty-six million).

Twenty-five years ago, January 26, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$449,476,000,000 (Four hundred forty-nine billion, four hundred seventy-six million) which reflects a debt increase of over \$5 trillion—\$5,037,804,357,810.54 (Five trillion, thirty-seven billion, eight hundred four million, three hundred fifty-seven thousand, eight hundred ten dollars and fifty-four cents) during the past 25 years.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are in morning business and allowed to speak for 10 minutes; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

SECOND SESSION OF THE 105TH CONGRESS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, as we begin a new year in the U.S. Congress, the second session of this Congress, I look forward with anticipation to a number of issues we must address. I hope we can do that in a bipartisan way, and I hope we will not be distracted by a lot of other things that come up during the year and that we will actually accomplish some good things for the country.

I recognize that outside this Chamber there is now a scandal that exists in this country. We will undoubtedly learn the facts about the allegations that have been made, and the American people will make a judgment based upon those facts. That is the way it should be. To make judgments about allegations and about rumors and about planted stories, and so on, before the facts are known is not a proper way to deal with them.

But notwithstanding what is happening outside this Chamber, we have responsibilities here. I was interested to learn that in the first hour and a half of this second session, we had people come to the Chamber of the Senate, once again, and tell us about how our country works and what is wrong with our country. It was interesting to me that the Chamber lights had hardly become warm when we had Members come to the floor to, once again, talk about who the big spenders are. "Oh, the big spenders on this side" and "the big spenders on"—it is interesting that nothing ever changes.

I watched the American music awards show on television last night. I thought to myself as I listened to a bit of this this morning that, had this discussion taken place yesterday, we could have entered some of this dialog for best rap artist or best presentation in rap music. It certainly is a rap. There is no tune there, but they never miss a lyric. It is that this side represents the big spenders.

I just want to begin for a moment today to talk about where we are and how we got here and what our need is this year to address critical issues for this country.

First of all, where are we? We are in a country that is blessed with a very strong economy. Things are going well in this country. Unemployment is down. Welfare is down. Crime is down. Inflation is down. Economic growth is up. More people are working. Things are better in this country.

I heard not too many minutes ago someone say, "But none of that has anything to do with Congress; it has to do with a good economy." I remind Members of Congress that in 1993, this President and this Congress decided to take a tough vote. Are we going to put this country back on track? Are we going to tell the American people that we are serious about wrestling this crippling budget deficit to the ground? Are we going to cast a hard vote, an unpopular vote, a tough vote? The an-

swer was yes. We did, by one vote in the U.S. Senate and one vote in the U.S. House of Representatives, cut spending. Yes, we increased some taxes, and we said to the American people we are serious about getting this country's fiscal house in order. We are going to wrestle that Federal deficit to the ground. And the fact is, it gave the American people confidence. They said, "These folks are serious; they understand this is a serious problem for this country and they are willing to make tough votes."

I went home to my State and said, "I voted yes. I voted yes because I believe it is the best thing for this country to send a signal to the markets, the American citizens and everyone in this world that this country cares about these issues and we intend, this President intends and this Congress intends, to get our fiscal house in order." And by one vote we passed a plan in 1993 that set this economy off into a universe of economic growth and economic opportunity—by one vote.

This economy rests on people's confidence. If people are confident about the future, they do things that reflect that confidence: They buy cars; they buy houses; they invest; they do things that reflect their confidence about the future. If they are not confident, they make different decisions. Based on people's confidence or lack of it, this economy moves forward or lurches backward.

My point is, for someone to say this is all accidental is to ignore history. This is not accidental. This President deserves some credit for a fiscal policy that was tough and no nonsense and said we care about wrestling this Federal budget deficit to the ground. And this Congress, those of us in it who voted yes on that, participated in it.

I might add, while people are pointing across aisles, as I heard earlier, about big spending in the Congress, we did not even get one vote by accident from the other side of the aisle for a fiscal policy that says we are going to solve this deficit problem.

We come to today with a good economy and, I think, some good news ahead of us. I hope all of us, reaching across the aisle, can decide we have a common agenda. When people sit around their homes in the evening and have supper together and talk about their lives, what do they talk about? They talk about these things: Are our kids going to a good school, getting a good education? Do we have a good job or opportunity for a decent job that pays well with decent benefits? Do our children or grandparents have an opportunity for health care that is good? Can they afford it? Are our streets safe, our neighborhoods safe? Is the air clean, the water we drink safe, the food we eat safe? What about our roads? In what condition are our roads and bridges? And what about family farms and those who produce our food? Those are the issues that people care about and want us to do something about.